

Message Text

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41

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-10 ISO-00 ACDA-05 SSO-00 NSCE-00

INRE-00 USIE-00 NEAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OPR-02

SY-05 OC-05 CCO-00 A-01 SCCT-01 SAM-01 SAB-01 /100 W

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O 151520Z OCT 75

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6647

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY ATHENS PRIORITY

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY DAMASUCS PRIORITY

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY JIDDA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY

USMISSION USUN NY IMMEDIATE

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON UK

COMMSIXTHFLT

CTF SIX ZERO

CTF SIX ONE

CTF SIX TWO

FOSIF ROTA SPAIN

FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA

DIA WASHDC

CIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 12820

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E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, LE

SUBJECT: SERIOUS CLASHES IN EAST BEIRUT ENDANGER TRUCE

REF: BEIRUT 12742 (14 OCT 1420Z)

1. SUMMARY: FIGHTING SPREAD IN SEVERAL QUARTERS OF BEIRUT NIGHT OF OCT 14-15. ALTHOUGH THERE HAS NOT YET BEEN A WIDESPREAD RETURN TO THE BARRICADES, THE DEVELOPING TRUCE IS IN JEOPARDY AS OF MID-DAY OCT 15. THE "NATIONAL DIALOGUE COMMITTEE" STILL GOES THROUGH ITS PACES BUT RESULTS ARE MINOR SO FAR. END SUMMARY.

2. ESCALATED FIGHTING IN SEVERAL QUARTERS OF EAST BEIRUT NIGHT OF OCT 14-15 HAS BROUGHT BACK THE THREAT OF MAJOR CIVIL STRIFE, JUST WHEN THE COUNTRY'S POWER BROKERS SEEMED AGAIN ON THE VERGE OF A SETTLEMENT. CLASHES WERE SEVERE IN NABA, SIN EL-FIL, AND DEKWANEH--THE SOLE AREAS OF SERIOUS FIGHTING THE NIGHT BEFORE--BUT THIS TIME MAJOR EXCHANGES OF FIRE ALSO INCLUDED THE TEL ZAATAR REFUGEE CAMP, THE CHRISTIAN STRONGHOLD OF ASHRAFIYEH, AND THE ARMENIAN QUARTER OF BOURJ HAMMOUD, ALL NEARBY. MANY ROUNDS OF MORTAR AND (ACCORDING TO SEVERAL REPORTS) 23MM ANTI-AIRCRAFT BATTERIES USED AS ARTILLERY WERE FIRED FROM THE TEL ZAATAR CAMP TOWARD ASHRAFIYEH. SOME OF THESE ROUNDS FELL IN BOURJ HAMMOUD, WHICH IS CAUSING A SHARP REACTION AMONG ARMENIANS TODAY, OCT 15, FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THIS YEAR'S FIGHTING.

3. CLASHES REPORTEDLY WERE CONTINUING THIS MORNING IN EAST BEIRUT, THOUGH SOMEWHAT REDUCED, AND SEVERAL OTHER QUARTERS FARTHER WEST WERE AFFECTED ALSO ON A SMALLER SCALE. THE DORA TRAFFIC CIRCLE NEAR BOURJ HAMMOUD WAS BLOCKED BY ARMED MEN. TENSIONS ARE ALSO RETURNING TO CHIYAH, PACIFIED SINCE THE WEEKEND, FOLLOWING THE NEWS THAT FIVE CHIYAH RESIDENTS HAVE BEEN KIDNAPPED. HOWEVER, AS YET (1200 HOURS LOCAL, OCT 15) NO WIDESPREAD RETURN TO THE BARRICADES IS OBSERVABLE.

4. TRIPOLI IS SAID TO BE STILL QUIET AFTER THE TRUCE AGREEMENT.
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RANGED WITH PLO HELP OCT 13. HOWEVER, THERE ARE NEW REPORTS OF TENSION IN THE BEKAA VALLEY FOLLOWING KIDNAPINGS OF FOUR MEN FROM A MOSLEM VILLAGE NEAR ZAHLE.

5. "WAIT AND SEE" ATTITUDE ON THE PART OF BEIRUT BUSINESS AND BANKING COMMUNITY, REPORTED EARLIER, PROVED JUSTIFIED BY OVERNIGHT EVENTS. BANKS, PORT AND MOST SHOPS CLOSED TODAY. AUB YESTERDAY ANNOUNCED INDEFINITE POST-

PONEMENT OF CLASSES SCHEDULED TO BEGIN TODAY. ALTHOUGH NO SERIOUS SHORTAGE OF FOODSTUFFS HAS DEVELOPED, SUGAR, FLOUR, POWDERED MILK, CANNED MEATS, AND SIMILAR ITEMS THAT CAN BE HOARDED FOR AN EMERGENCY ARE IN SHORT SUPPLY.

6. THE "NATIONAL DIALOGUE COMMITTEE" MET YESTERDAY. THE PLO'S FIVE-POINT MEMORANDUM HANDED TO PREMIER KARAME THE DAY BEFORE (REFTEL) WAS READ TO THE COMMITTEE AND A DEBATE ENSUED ON THE PALESTINIAN PRESENCE. (THE REPORT REFTEL THAT THE COMMITTEE MAY HAVE TAKEN NOTE OF THE MEMORANDUM OCT 13 WAS ERRONEOUS.) THE MEMORANDUM'S TEXT READ TO COMMITTEE AND PUBLISHED IN TODAY'S PRESS DIFFERS FROM THE VERSION REFTEL, CHIEFLY IN THAT I OMITS DECLARATION THAT LEBANESE ARE FREE TO DEBATE LEBANESE-PALESTINIAN RELATIONS BUT ADDS STATEMENT THAT GOL SHOULD EXERCISE AUTHORITY THROUGHOUT LEBANESE TERRITORY. YESTERDAY'S DIALOGUE COMMITTEE DEBATE REPORTEDLY RESULTED IN GENERAL APPROVAL OF MEMORANDUM, EVEN BY GEMAYEL WHO PRAISED 'ARAFAT BUT WONDERED WHETHER "RESISTANCE" WAS UNITED UNDER HIS LEADERSHIP. KARAME TOLD PRESS AFTER SESSION THAT COMMITTEE CONSIDERED PLO MEMORANDUM "POSITIVE AND CONSTRUCTIVE."

7. DIALOGUE COMMITTEE NOT YET SCHEDULED TO MEET AGAIN, BUT POLITICAL SUBCOMMITTEE DUE TO HOLD FIRST SESSION TOMORROW. THIS TAKES PLACE AMID UNCONFIRMED REPORT THAT INTMIN CHAMOUN IS MIFFED OVER COMPOSITIN OF THIS SUBCOMMITTEE. CHAMOUN DID NOT ATTEND YESTERDAY'S SESSION OF FULL COMMITTEE.

8. WITH ATTENTION TURNED TOWARD CAIRO FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING, ONLY OTHER EVEN ON POLITICAL FRONT IS PUBLICATION OF MEMORANDUM SUBMITTED TO PRES FRANGIE BY HEAD OF CONFIDENTIAL

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MARONITE MONASTERIES AND HEAD OF MARONITE LEAGUE. THESE GROUPS ARE AMONG LEADING CLERICAL AND LAY ORGANIZATIONS OF MARONITES. BIAS OF BOTH IS HARD-LINING CHRISTIAN, AS SHOWN BY CONTENT AND TONE OF MEMORANDUM. IT STRESSED VIEW THAT DEMANDS FOR REFORM CAN BE CONSIDERED ONLY AFTER LEBANESE AUTHORITIES HAVE RESTORED FULL CONTROL OVER LEBANESE TERRITORY, A REFERENCE TO PALESTINIAN INROADS. THE DOCUMENT ALSO CRITICIZED KARAME'S "SALVATION GOVT" AND THE NON-USE OF THE ARMY IN THE PRESENT CRISIS. GODLEY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: COMBAT OPERATIONS, LIMITATIONS OF HOSTILITIES, POLITICAL SUMMARIES, COMBAT ZONES, CIVIL DISORDERS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 15 OCT 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ElyME
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975BEIRUT12820
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750357-0816
From: BEIRUT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751053/aaaabutk.tel
Line Count: 164
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 BEIRUT 12742
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 28 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <28 MAY 2003 by ifshinsr>; APPROVED <07 OCT 2003 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SERIOUS CLASHES IN EAST BEIRUT ENDANGER TRUCE
TAGS: PINS, PINT, LE
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006